(b) The Government announced National Policy on Older persons in January, 1999 and has taken a number of steps/initiatives to ameliorate the pitiable condition of older persons of the country, which would benefit older persons of Maharashtra also.

(c) No Sir. However, a National Council for Older Persons has been established to operationalize the National Policy on Older Persons.

(d) The Government does not feel the need for a National Commission for Older Persons in view of the establishment of the National Council for Older Persons.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Policy Formulated for Increasing Export

2946. SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated any policy for increasing the exports of the country during the next five years;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of targets fixed for exports during this period; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (d) Export Promotion is a continuous process and steps to enhance the export growth are continuously being taken by the Government through various measures which include reduction in transaction cost through decentralization, simplication of procedures and other measures as enumerated in the Export-Import Policy. Steps are also taken to promote exports through multilateral and bilateral initiatives, identification of thrust sectors and focus regions. Export growth targets are fixed annually by the Government. The export growth target for 2000-2001 is 18%. The export growth rate for April-June 2000-01 is 27.65% which is above the target fixed for the whole year.

Differential Customs and Excise Duties between India and Nepal

2947. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a sharp differential in Customs and Excise duties between India and Nepal;

(b) whether it is also a fact that as a result of this differential, Nepal has been dumping huge stock of vanaspati, sugar and cigarettes;

(c) if so, the value of stock dumped, both in physical and value terms, during 1997-98, 1998-99 and 1999-2000;

(d) whether as a result of this heavy dumping, these industries in India are being forced to close down; and

(e) the corrective measures proposed to be taken in this regard to help the domestic industries?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) The position regarding customs and excise duties charged in India and Nepal is given below:—

IN INDIA

Advalorem rates of basic customs duty are 5%, 15%, 25% and 35%. In addition to the basic duty of customs, duties of customs as hereunder are also leviable, Viz.:—

(i) Surcharge @ 10% on the basic duty of customs;

(ii) Additional duty equivalent to the excise duty on similar articles produced or manufactured in India;

(iii) Special Additional Duty @4%. This is calculated on the aggregate of assessable value of basic duty of customs (with surcharge)+ Counterveiling duty.

By and large and single rate of 16% CENVAT is applicable on all excisable goods. In addition, a few specified commodities are chargeable to special excise duty of 8%, 16% or 24%. .

IN NEPAL

There are four slabs of import customs duty namelly 5%, 15%, 25% and 40%.

Excise duty is being levied and collected only in respect of very few items like sugar, cigarettes, Ketchu (Katha), alocoholic liquor/beverages, polythene bags and bricks.

Value Added Tax (VAT) @ 10% is also leviable on all imported and manufactured goods in Nepal;

(b) No complaint has been received about the dumping of vanaspati, sugar or cigarettes by Nepal in India.

(c) Quantity and Value of Vanaspati, sugar and cigarettes imported from Nepal during 1997-98, 1998-99 and 1999-2000 (April—December 1999) are given below:—

(*Quantity in MTs, Value in Indian Rupees crores*)

Commodity	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000 (April—Dec' 1999)	
	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
Vanaspati (Code 1516 & 1518)	20044	60.27	47041	184.16	22169	75.42
Sugar (Code 1701)	Nil	Nil	24	0.03	71	0.09
Cigarettes	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

(source: DGCI&S, Calcutta)

(d) and (e) There have been complaints that imports of vanaspati from Nepal without payment of customs duty under the Indo-Nepal Treaty of Trade is adversely affecting the Indian Vanaspati industry. In such cases, the Treaty provides for the corrective measures to be taken by the Governments of India and Nepal in mutual consultation.

News-item captioned "Major Industrial segments post dismal growth"

2948. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Major industrial segments post dismal growth" appearing in the Economic Times, dated 29th July, 2000;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take to address the problems leading to the dismal growth performance of the Indian Industries during the current year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) Yes, Sir.